

1194.22(a): Text Descriptions

Definition

A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content)

Non-Text Elements

- What is your biggest non-text element in your web page?
 - Images: No
 - Applets: No
 - Tables: No
 - Forms: No
- Your biggest non-text element is:

Non-Text Elements (cont)

- The Web Page
- Why?
 - Your source code is text; the information in the browser is rendered from that code
 - The browser, or the server, renders the source code to a code format (HTML)
 - That code format (HTML) is rendered to a readable format for the user

Non-Text Elements (cont)

- Why is this important?
 - Browsers only understand HTML
 - The Screen or Braille reader only understands the HTML that is produced
 - The Screen or Braille reader requires some additional coding that are included in HTML 4.01 but not in HTML 3.2
 - Screen or Braille readers have their own plug-ins and may require alternative means for equivalent information

Non-Text Elements (cont)

- Conclusion

- Your biggest non-text element is the web page and it must be rendered to a text equivalent or provide an alternative means of access to the information
- Sub-paragraphs (a)-(p) describe the elements that need to be addressed and some alternative means of providing equivalent information

Non-Text Elements (cont)

- What are the Non-Text Elements?
 - Images
 - Objects
 - Applets
 - Documents in Proprietary Formats
 - PDF
 - Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc
 - ZIP

Images

- What should be the equivalent information for the image below?



Images (cont)

- First: ALT attribute is required because it is a non-text element
- Second: Does the image convey information?
 - Yes
- Is this sufficient?
 - Alt=“well.gif (832 bytes)”
 - Do you know what is a “well.gif”?

Images (cont)

- How do you describe the information in an image?
 - You use the ALT attribute:
 - Code:
 - ``

Images (cont)

- Do I need to describe everything about the image?
 - What is the main information:
 - **Welcome to FAA.gov,**
that is the minimum
 - Do I need to describe the plane and sky?
 - No, it doesn't convey any additional information

Images (cont)

- The level of description should convey the meaning of the image. Under W3C, you would need to describe everything.

Images (cont)

- Now, what is the description for the image below?



Images (cont)

- How about the name of the image: Well.gif
 - The screenreader will read “graphic well.gif”.
 - Does that convey the information from the image? No, so don’t use the name of the image as the descriptive text.
- How about what the image says “Welcome to FAA.gov”
 - The screenreader will read “graphic Welcome to FAA. gov”. Which tells me, I’m at the FAA web site

Images (cont)

- Do I need to describe the plane and sky?
 - In this case, the answer is “No” because it is not pertinent to the information convey in the image.
- What about images that do not have text in the image?
 - Non-informational images like bullets, spacers, arrow, etc, will be discussed later.

Images (cont)

- Image that does not have text
 - Below is an example of an image without text (not arrows, bullets, spacer, etc)



Images (cont)

- What should be the text?
 - Does the image convey information?
 - If an image is used (other than spacer, bullet, arrows, etc) on a web page, then assume that it is being used to convey some kind of information
 - Ask the content provider for the text description of the image and use that text. If the content provider is not sure, then provide meaningful text

Images (cont)

- The image is being used to convey some kind of information.
- You could use this: “Three people standing in a hangar either waiting or looking at parked airplanes on the tarmac. The people look to be professionally dressed and two people (one man and one woman) are each carrying a briefcase. The third has carryall on rollers and appears to be a woman. There are two express passenger jets in picture. The sky has a brown tint to it.”

Images (cont)

- The other option: “Three people waiting for an airplane in a hangar”. This conveys the same basic information as the previous description.
- How much is too much or too little text description?
 - Rule of thumb: It shouldn’t be more than 50 –70 characters
 - Ask the image content provider to give you the text or meaning of the image
 - Basically, it gets down to a judgment call and experience

Images (cont)

- Logos or images with text
 - Provide all the pertinent information of the image
 - Example:



Images (cont)

- Is alt=“FirstGov” sufficient?
 - If this was your first time seeing the image, do you know what “FirstGov” is?
 - Probably the answer is “No”
 - What does a visual reader see?
 - FIRSTGOV.gov, The U.S. governments official web portal
 - Should this information be share equally with people using assistive technology or who have low vision?

Images (cont)

- Common Issue

- There is a tendency not to convey all textual information in a image to people using assistive technology.
- Extend the same courtesy to people using assistive technology as you do the visual users.

- Solution

- Allow the user to determine what is relevant or not. Provide the relevant information.

Images (cont)

- Quick Review:
- What's wrong with this code?
 - ``
- Missing ALT attribute
- Can you guess what is the text description?
 - If you can't, then how can other users?

Images (cont)

- Corrected Code
 - ``
- Can you visualize the image without actually seeing it?
- Why didn't I describe the colors?

Images (cont)

- People who are blind from birth don't perceive color the way people who are not blind?
 - Outside the physics, describe the color RED.
 - What does red face mean?
 - A person is embarrassed
 - A person is very angry
 - A person just finished exercising

Images (cont)

- Color (outside the physics) is conceptual in its use to describe things. People who are blind live in the same environment and learn the same concepts. Do not decide what is relevant information, describe the image and allow the user to decide what is relevant.
- The reason I use “multiple colors” is that it what be a very long description to describe every hot air balloon and each individual color.

Images (cont)

- Non-Informational images
 - Bullets, Arrows, Spacers, etc
 - Do not require descriptive text
 - Why:
 - If the bullet, arrow, spacer, etc. is not necessary to understand the page content
 - Using W3C Recommendation: **13.8 How to specify alternate text Attribute definitions**
“... (next page)”

Images (cont)

- Do not specify irrelevant alternate text when including images intended to format a page, for instance, alt="red ball" would be inappropriate for an image that adds a red ball for decorating a heading or paragraph. In such cases, the alternate text should be the empty string (""). Authors are in any case advised to avoid using images to format pages; style sheets should be used instead.
- Do not specify meaningless alternate text (e.g., "dummy text"). Not only will this frustrate users, it will slow down user agents that must convert text to speech or Braille output. Implementers should consult the section on accessibility for information about how to handle cases of omitted alternate text.”

Images (cont)

- How do I code?
 - Alt="" The "" tells the assistive technology device to skip over the image.
 - Do not use Alt="[space]". Now you will have little boxes popping up over your web page and the assistive technology device may say "space"
- When does an Arrow convey content information?

Images (cont)

- When it is not used for visual eye-candy
- Example: You have an article on the web page that says “Five Techniques for Cyber Security”. Instead of doing 1,2,3,4,and 5, you decided to use Arrows to highlight each technique. At this point, the Arrows are now taking the place of 1,2,3,4, and 5. The Arrow’s “ALT” attribute should say, at the very least, alt=“1”, alt=“2”, etc for each technique. If I had put 1,2,3,4 and 5 for each technique and used the Arrows, the Arrows are now visual eye-candy and should have alt=“”.

Images (cont)

- What is the D-Link?
 - The D-Link, [D], is a generic term meaning “descriptive link”
- What is it used for?
 - If an image requires additional description, then this provides a link to a descriptive page
 - For example: A financial graph could be explained in 255 characters but is it usable?

Images (cont)

- Not to a person with a screen or Braille reader. The reason is that the “alt” attribute is a tool tip for web pages. The screen or Braille reader will read all the text without stopping. The ‘descriptive’ page will allow the user to review information by navigating the page.
- How does it work?
 - First, do not put [D], this is generic term. Put a descriptive text as to what the page is about (i.e. FY2001 Info)

Images (cont)

- Second, don't forget that the image still needs an “alt” attribute for two reasons:
 - 1. Describe the image
 - 2. If using a [D] then tell the person where this link is located on the web page

Images (cont)

- Common Errors

- Multiple or single [D] instead of text description.
 - The screen reader will say “link D”. The user will not understand where “link D” will take the user.
- Forget to create the descriptive page.
- Forget to tell the user which link to use.

Applets, Objects, Embedded

- Requires ALT attribute
 - ALT attribute should contain equivalent information
 - If equivalent information cannot be conveyed?
 - Use the ALT attribute to convey where the information is located. DO NOT USE a URL address.
(i.e. information at <http://www.xyz.gov/news/pr/2003/news.htm>)
 - Provide text link on the page to the information
(i.e. information at “news link”)

Applets, Objects, Embed (cont)

- Typical coding
 - `<applet alt="Java menu, text links can be found at bottom of page">`
- What's wrong with this?
 - Some text readers cannot read the ALT attribute inside the Applet tag.

Applets, Objects, Embed (cont)

- Preferred coding

- `<applet alt="Java menu, text links can be found at bottom of page">`

Java menu, text links can be found
at bottom of page

`<param>`

- Place text between Applet and the first Param tag. It does not affect the Applet but is readable by most readers.

5 Simple Rules for Non-Text Elements

- 1. Images that provide content or navigation are required to have descriptive text (via alt attribute)
- 2. Images that do not provide content or navigation (arrow, bullets, spacer, etc) are required to have the alt attribute (alt=“”)

5 Simple Rules for Non-Text Elements (cont)

- 3. Applets, Objects, and Embedded elements require an ALT attribute
- 4. Proprietary formats, (i.e. Word, PDF, Excel, etc), are required to be Section 508 compliant or an alternative format (HTML, TXT, RTF) must be provided.
- 5. D-Links, [D], should be descriptive text links.